

WORKFORCE FOCUS

Women

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. Growth in the size of the labor force is slowing as the baby boom generation moves into retirement. During the 1990s, Washington's labor force grew at an annual rate of 1.8 percent. During the current decade, this rate will slow to 1.3 percent, and from 2010 to 2020, it will drop to only 0.9 percent.

Part of the solution to the coming labor shortage should come from preparing women who, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large. In 1975, 47 percent of working-age women in Washington were in the labor market. By 2000, this number reached 62.5 percent.

A modest increase to 63.5 percent is expected by 2010, and then because of population aging, the overall participation rate will decline.¹

Research on how well Washington's workforce development system is preparing women indicates that:²

- **Women are just as likely, or even more likely, than men to enroll in workforce development programs with the exception of apprenticeships (Figure 1).** While only 11 percent of the state's apprentices are women, the national average is about 8 percent.

FIGURE 1

Percentage of Women in Workforce Development Programs

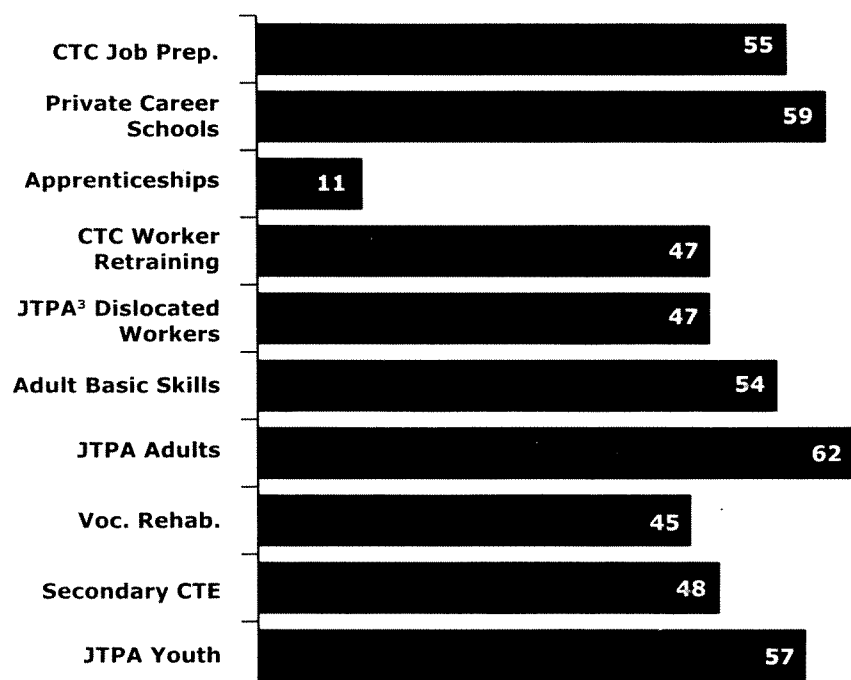
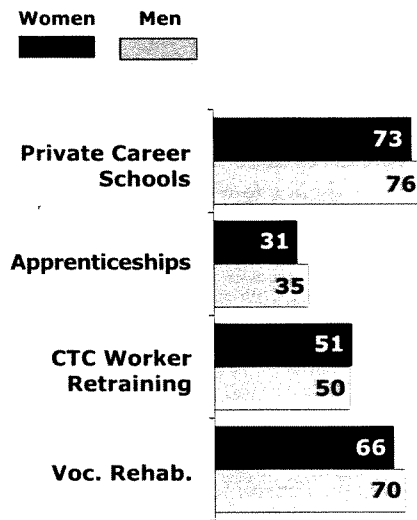


FIGURE 2

Percentage of Women and Men Completing Workforce Development Programs



- Women are just as likely as men to complete workforce development programs (Figure 2).⁴
- Other than apprenticeships and adult basic skills education, employment rates for women are not substantially lower than for men (Figure 3).⁵ The difference for apprenticeship is due to women completing at a lower rate, and differences in their preprogram employment history.
- After secondary career and technical education, girls are more likely than boys to be employed and to continue in further education after high school (47 percent compared to 40 percent).
- Women earn substantially less per hour and per annum than men (Figures 4 and 5).⁶
- Despite the lower levels of wages, women are just as likely as men to report satisfaction with their workforce development programs (Figure 6).

FIGURE 3

Employment Rates of Women and Men After Workforce Development Programs
(Percentage employed during third quarter after leaving the program)

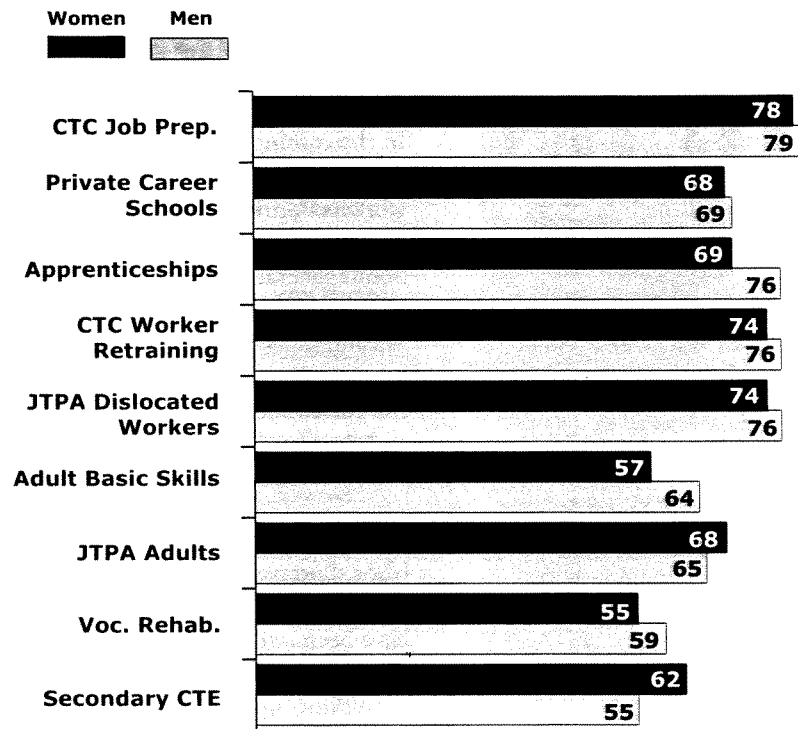


FIGURE 4

Hourly Wages of Women and Men After Workforce Development Programs
(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)

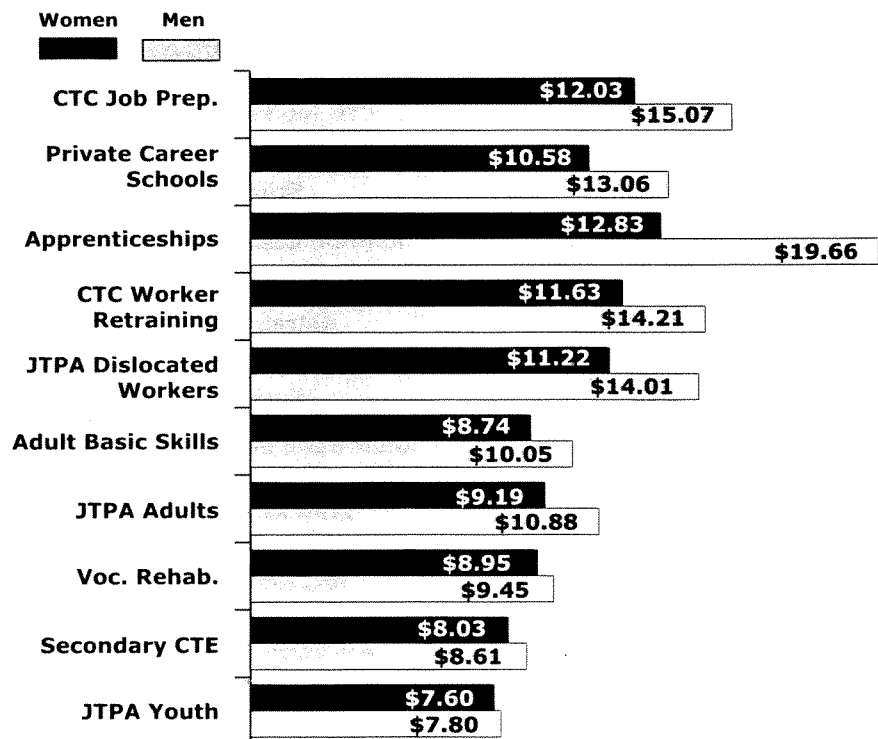
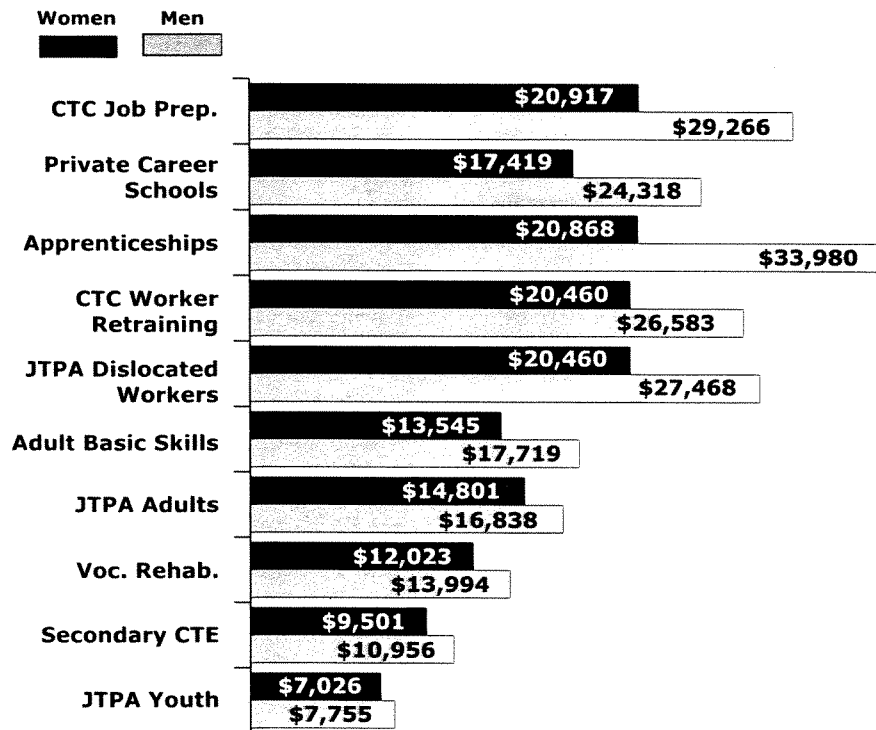


FIGURE 5

**Annual Earnings of Women and Men
After Workforce Development Programs**
(Median based on third quarter after leaving the program)



Glossary

**Community and Technical
Colleges Job Preparatory**

(CTC Job Prep.) provides training and education for a Vocational Associate of Arts degree or a vocational certificate.

Private Career Schools are operated by private businesses for students intending to complete vocational certificates or degrees.

Apprenticeships combine classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training under supervision of a journey-level craftsman or trade professional.

Worker Retraining at Community and Technical Colleges (CTC Worker Retraining) provides dislocated workers and long-term unemployed with access to job retraining.

Job Training Partnership Act Dislocated Workers (JTPA Dislocated Workers) was a federal employment and training program for dislocated workers replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

Adult Basic Skills Education (Adult Basic Skills) provides literacy and math instruction for adults.

Job Training Partnership Act Adults (JTPA Adults) was a federal employment and training program for low-income adults replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

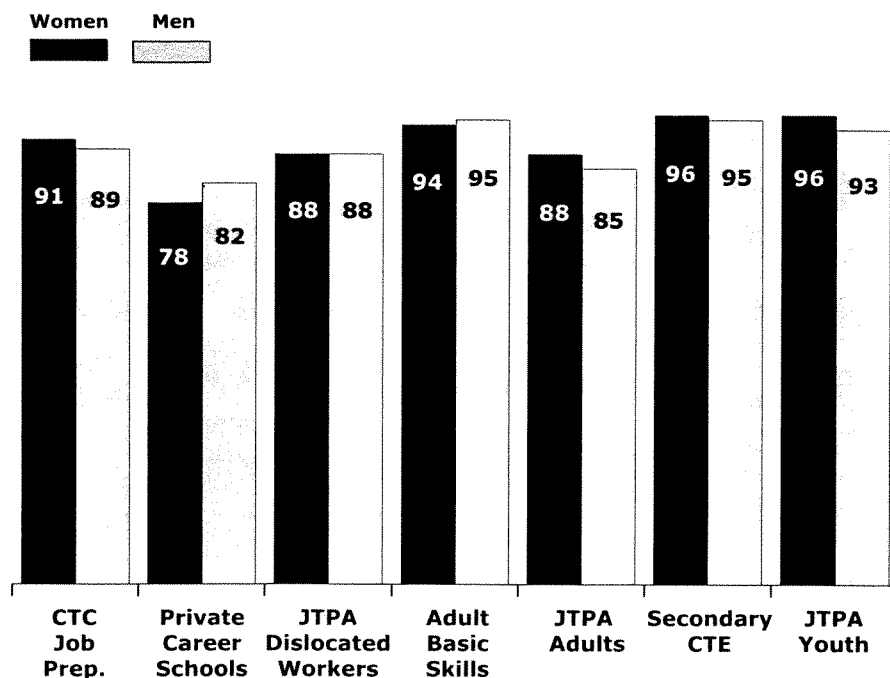
Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc. Rehab.) offers services to help individuals with disabilities become employed.

Secondary Career and Technical Education (Secondary CTE) is training and vocational education in high schools.

Job Training Partnership Act Youth (JTPA Youth) was a federal employment and training program for low-income youth 16 to 21 replaced by the Workforce Investment Act.

FIGURE 6

**Percentage of Women and Men Satisfied
With Workforce Development Programs**



End Notes

¹"2001 Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington," Washington State Office of Financial Management and Washington State Employment Security Department, April 2001.

²For data sources, methodology, and program description, see *Workforce Training Results 2002* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

³The Workforce Investment Act replaced the Job Training Partnership Act on July 1, 2000. In order to have sufficient time to follow postprogram employment and earnings, the data here is based on participants who exited between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000.

⁴Completion rate data is not available for many programs.

⁵Employment rates are based only on employment recorded in Employment Security Department records in Washington and other northwest states, thereby understating the actual rate of employment by about 10 percentage points. The rates are for all program participants, not just those who completed the program.

⁶Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board research has repeatedly found substantial gender differences in hourly wages and earnings. Results from community and technical colleges research indicates that women and men completing different fields of study explains most of the gender differences in hourly wages and earnings. Women and men with similar employment histories who complete the same field of study have similar hourly wages and earnings. Women, however, disproportionately complete lower paying fields of study, such as early childhood education, while men disproportionately complete higher paying fields of study, such as information technology.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Mission

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's mission is to bring business, labor, and the public sector together to shape strategies to best meet the state and local workforce and employer needs of Washington in order to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this Mission, Board members, with the support of staff, work together to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.
- Promote an integrated system of workforce development that responds to the lifelong learning needs of the current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the nonbaccalaureate training and education needs of workers and employers.
- Facilitate innovations in workforce development policy and practices.
- Ensure system quality and accountability by evaluating results and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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